

THE SMALL MAMMALS OF BARIO, KELABIT HIGHLANDS SARAWAK

Mustafa Abdul Rahman, Mohd Tajuddin Abdullah & Besar Ketol
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

ABSTRACT

*The aim of the study was to find the composition of the small mammals in the forests of Bario. Two study sites were chosen; the salt well near Pa' Ukat and the area down stream of the new reservoir near Kampong Arudalan. Rodents and bats were captured using live traps and mist nets respectively. A total of 42 animals was captured comprising of 7 species of small mammals, five were bats and two were rodents. The commonest mammal was *Cynopterus brachyotis*.*

INTRODUCTION

Collection of mammals in Bario and its vicinity was carried out by Tom Harrisson between September 1945 and December 1949, while carrying out his duties as a military officer (Davis, 1958). Tom Harrisson managed to collect 202 specimens representing 51 species. According to Davis (1958), Tom Harrisson reported that bearded pig (*Sus barbatus*) were seasonally abundant and served as a constant source of meat for the Kelabits. Temadau (*Bos sondaicus*) was also reported to be wandering occasionally from grasslands about 50 miles in the headwaters of the Bahau River.

Prior to Tom Harrisson's collection, Davis (1958) mentioned that two persons by the name of Lonnberg and Mjoberg reported 12 species of mammals were collected. From the previous reports and records, one can infer that the population of wildlife in Bario was quite high.

The purpose of this study was to determine the composition of the small mammal species in Bario and to compare the number of species found in the two locations studied. The study also aimed at comparing the information gathered during this study and others previously carried out in Bario.

STUDY AREAS

Two sites were selected for this study. The first study site was at the salt well near Pa' Ukat. The area consists of kerangas and secondary forest with pockets of bamboo clumps. The altitude was about 1,100m asl. A small stream runs close to the salt well. Salt is still being processed here but no salt processing was carried out during the study period. The small mammal traps were placed along the small streams and bat mist nets were deployed randomly in the forest areas. Small mammal trapping and bat mist netting were carried out around this area from 12-15 April 1995.